

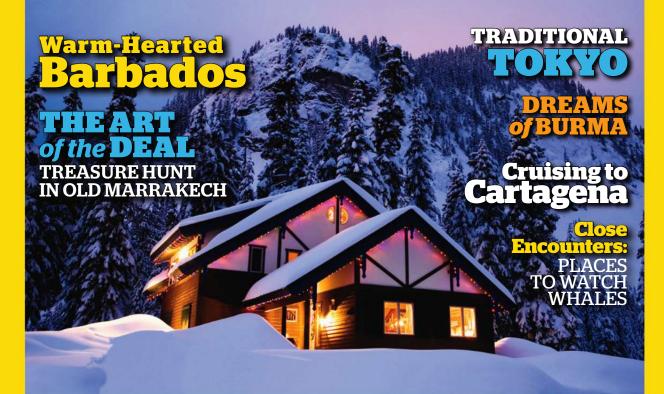


TRAMELER

ALL TRAVEL, ALL THE TIME | Jan-Feb 2011

IN PRAISE of WILLIAM

(42 REASONS TO CELEBRATE THE SEASON)





NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2011, VOLUME 28, NUMBER 1

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Barbados: It's a Wonderful Life

This fun-loving, big-hearted Caribbean island will have you wishing you lived here, too.

Introduction by Keith Bellows

In Praise of Snow

Forty-two experiences from Alaska to Norway invite you to embrace—not escape—winter. *\overline{\textit{\textit{O}}} Plus: A slideshow of the world's largest earth art installation on frozen Lake Baikal, Siberia.

By Andrew McCarthy Photographs by Chris Rainier

Marrakech: The Art of the Deal

On the Moroccan city's shop-filled streets, a savvy haggler teaches a boy how to bargain with the best.

By Donovan Webster

Dreams of Burma

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PHOTOGRAPHS BY SUSAN SEUBERT (BARBADOS) AND CHRISTIAN HEEB/LAIF/REDUX (CARTAGENA).



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Get active: A Save the Children staffer helps at a Haitian mobile clinic.

EDITOR'S NOTE



BY KEITH BELLOWS, EDITOR

Travel to Make a Difference

E HAVE ALWAYS traveled to enrich ourselves. But increasingly we're inspired to try to enrich the lives of others as much as they have enriched ours—villagers in Papua New Guinea, traditional weavers in Peru, Mongolian schoolchildren. We've all been touched in our travels by somebody or some situation that moves us to donate time, money, or expertise. There are lots of companies jumping on the voluntourism bandwagon, several of which end up doing more harm than good, but the National Geographic Society's Global Action Atlas provides a database of carefully vetted projects tailor-made for caring travelers. If a place touches you, inspires you, changes you, the Action Atlas offers a way to follow up.

Go to *actionatlas.org*, and you'll encounter an interactive website that spotlights hundreds (soon thousands) of projects worldwide grappling with critical challenges—from freshwater conservation and climate change to mission travel and cultural preservation. The map viewer displays each project as an icon. Mouse over it to reveal details, media galleries, blogs, and links to nearby and similar projects. There's also a "Take Action" button that allows you to choose from a menu of actions: Donate, Volunteer, Fan, Advocate, Visit. The Atlas is the brainchild of the Society's former Chief Cartographer Allen Carroll and Director of Conservation and Special Projects Frank Biasi. "The Society's mission statement is 'to inspire people to care about the planet," says Carroll. "We wanted to create a springboard from inspiration to action. If we have any chance to



Shop 'til you drop: Luxury cars are on display at a shopping mall in Kuwait.

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WHAT OUR READERS ARE SAYING



Gucci and Cupcakes

EADERS OF THE popular Kuwaiti blog 2:48AM got into a debate over our portrayal of The Avenues, the largest luxury shopping mall in Kuwait (Experience, September 2010). The blog's author called the piece superficial for focusing on the mall, and several locals took offense at our coverage: "The article implies that Kuwaitis are all rich and lazy," said one commenter. "I'm one of those people who has Kuwaiti friends who are not rich and who are struggling right along with a lot of other people."

But one expat commenter countered: "There is a lot of culture to be experienced in Kuwait, but you would never know it because Kuwait itself doesn't promote its rich history. This melting pot of sea merchants and pearl divers is now drowned in burger joints, Prada and Gucci stores, and a mountain of cupcake icing."

Peace of Mind

"I must take exception to Christopher Elliott's column, 'Overselling Travel Insurance' [October 2010]," wrote **David Horney** of High Point, North Carolina. "I always purchase travel insurance for international trips, and I insure all of the nonrefundable costs involved. I was scheduled to travel to Peru when my mother was dying, so I

BOATTRAVEL? MINEISAFERRY

A ferry—or pirogue or Thai long-tail boat—transports us into watery realms far from a city's bustle.

PAYTHE FARE—about 50 cents—to the lady behind the window counter, pass through a creaky metal turnstile, step carefully along a wooden plank swaying in time with the lapping waves below, and board a ferryboat in Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour. Heading up the stairs to the top deck, I manage to bonk my head, as usual, on the low overhang marked with a sign that says in English and Chinese, "Be Careful of Head."

My favorite seat is on the narrow bench built into the curve of the ferryboat's port side, which is open to the air. I lean over the rail and take a deep breath of sea smells mingled with petrol fumes emitted by the Marine Police boats at the next dock. The gunmetal-gray launches are revving their engines impatiently, itching to begin their nightly chase after smugglers.

Then we're off. I have taken this ferry ride from Sai Wan Ho, on Hong Kong island, across Victoria Harbour to Sam Ka Tsuen, in Kowloon, probably a hundred times, yet I've never noticed how many minutes—10? 12?—it lasts. Hong Kong is home to the famed Star Ferry, but years ago I dis-





Boat travel is my relaxation, my meditation. A journey feels incomplete unless it includes some time moving over water.



THE TREASURE HUNTER

Author Jan Brett travels the world searching for authentic details to color her books.

AN BRETT, an acclaimed author and illustrator of children's picture books, has integrated travel—of the most fanciful sort—into her work. Whether scoping out wildlife in Botswana for a book on Noah's Ark or studying troll mythology in northern Sweden, Brett travels in order to imbue her tales with the treasure of authenticity—both factually and visually. The result has been a string of popular titles such as *The Hat; Town Mouse, Country Mouse; Annie and the Wild Animals; The Three Snow Bears;* and *Armadillo Rodeo*. Her latest book, *The 3 Little Dassies*, took her to the African nation of Namibia, where she studied the rabbitlike creatures of the story's title and also the patterns and designs of tribal fabrics, which appear in the book's illustrations.

What on Earth are dassies? They're hyraxes, very odd mammals—subungulates—about the size of marmots or woodchucks. They make a high-pitched sound like a woman's scream. Guests at African lodges sometimes hear them at night and think they're leopards. No one has the heart to



Brett's Massachusetts office brims with artwork researched worldwide.

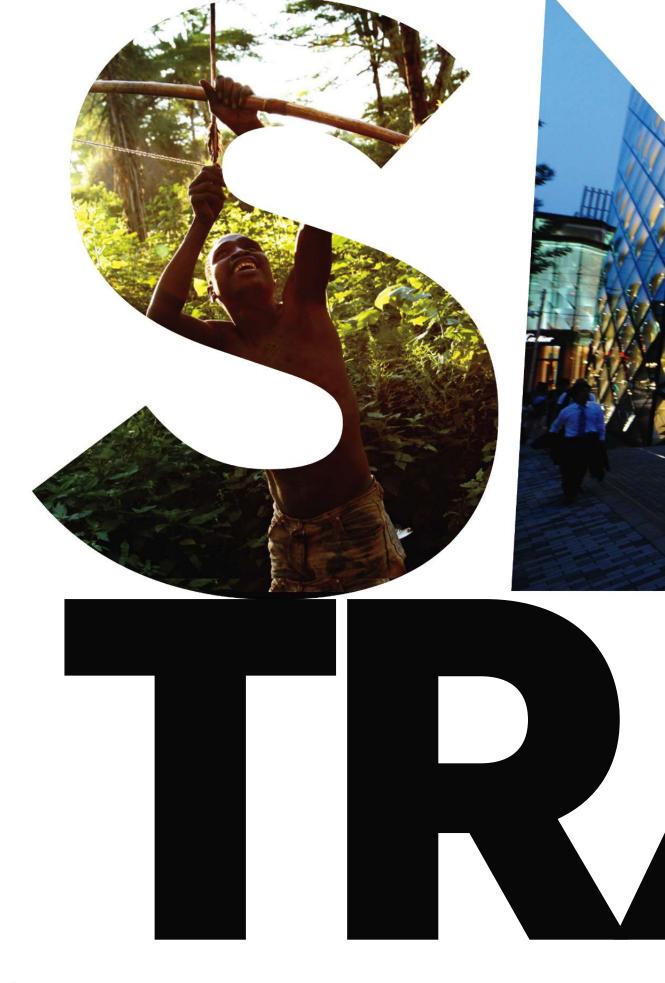
DON'T TWEET THE TRIP

An overload of tech gadgets is ruining our vacations. It's time to give the digits a rest.

AST SUMMER, my family of five was driving down a two-lane highway that cuts through some of the most gorgeous scenery in the Catskills. But the kids—ages three, four, and eight—didn't have a clue. They were busy watching Wizards of Waverly Place and Phineas and Ferb on iPhones. ¶ Me: "Kids, are you seeing this? Look at the mountains! Look at the cows!" ¶ Kids: "Uh-huh." ¶ Remember vacations before social networking, DVD screens in the back of the minivans, and Flip video cameras wrapped around every wrist? Think back. The smart phone wasn't always buzzing like a hornet. The GPS wasn't ordering you to make a U-turn now. The first thing you saw when you stepped onto the overlook at the Grand Canyon wasn't a miniature Grand Canyon in the viewfinder of your HD video camera.

Vacation meant leaving the world you knew for a world you didn't. We immersed ourselves in a new place with minimal interference from technology. To be fair, there were always shutterbugs who obsessively took photos, and some vacationers were never really there to begin with, because storemags & fantamag - magazines for all











TRAVEL
AT ITS
BEST



INSIDE SMAF

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lorida Where to Watch the Whales



SMART TRAVELER

The New Year's Lucky Bites

What and where to eat to ensure good fortune all year long. | By DONNA TABERT LONG

ONG BEFORE the 16th century, when the Manchus of Asia believed that sacrificing pigs drove away bad spirits, folks have been consuming all sorts of edible talismans to attract wealth and happiness in the New Year. Hungry for some good fortune in 2011? It's available in all flavors.

VIENNA: PIGS IN PASTRY

Legendary for its opera and arts, Vienna is one of Europe's most refined and elegant capitals. In the week between Christmas and New Year's Day, the city sheds its sophisticated facade to showcase—of all things—pink pigs. No ordinary hogs, these Viennese porkers are sweet, elaborate, edible, and artistically crafted from marzipan and meringue and grace shop windows throughout the city. At the chocolate counter in **Julius Meinl am Graben**, Vienna's luxury food emporium, residents queue up to buy intricately sculpted marzipan pig ears, tiny nougat snouts, and chocolate piglets in all sizes. Based on the notion in some cultures that pigs symbolize progress (pushing forward when rooting in the soil) and prosperity (because they're fat), Vienna's sweet versions are shared with friends and family to bring good luck in the new year. Find them at institutions such as the 137-year-old **Café Landtmann** and **Café Aida** (Vienna's coffeehouse chain, where the décor is pink) or shaped into cookies and perched on

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TOP 5

Bold New Shapes

The world's great architects unveil their latest projects. Here are five to visit. | *By* **JONATHAN LERNER**

RCHITECTS who defy convention can redefine a landscape, not to mention add buzz to a city. For travelers, these eyecatching projects become obligatory stops.

JEAN NOUVEL: 100 11TH AVENUE, NEW YORK CITY Alongside the new High Line, a former rail line transformed into an elevated park, sits Nouvel's elegant condo tower (right). Its curved surface consists of nearly 1,700 rectangular glass panels. Varied in size and tilted at slightly different angles, they wink and glitter continuously—just like the fragmented, animated city itself.

DANIEL LIEBESKIND: GRAND CANAL THEATRE, DUBLINThis off-kilter, red-and-white deconstructed rectangle signals change in the city's industrial docklands. The transparent walls slant at unexpected angles, shifting perspectives on reality like a great drama. Upcoming productions include The Sound of Music and Swan Lake.

MOSHE SAFDIE: MARINA BAY SANDS RESORT, SINGA- PORE Safdie's buildings express visions of the future. This work looks to the skies. The three towers (above) of this vast hotel-exhibition-entertainment complex are linked—55 stories up—by a curving, vertiginously cantilevered "SkyPark," where thousands of visitors can







48 HOURS

Tokyo Animated

The high-tech Japanese capital turns to the past for cutting-edge inspiration. | By ELIZABETH WOODSON

LEEK, futuristic metropolis for high-tech gadgets. Design-conscious fashion capital. Bubblegum-pop playground overrun by grown-up schoolgirls. Tokyo proudly flaunts these multiple personalities, but it also gives tradition a distinctly modern twist. Young residents are brushing up on the tea ceremony; customary foods are getting reinvented. And now, thanks to a newly built runway for international flights at Haneda airport (20 minutes outside central Tokyo), experiencing the Japanese capital just got easier.

WHAT TO DO Make your way past the Goths and Lolitas of the Hara-juku district to the 90-year-old **Meiji Jingu Shrine.** Interior gardens lead to this Shinto shrine dedicated to the emperor and empress responsible for bringing the country to the international stage in the late 19th century.

At the **Koomon Center,** visitors can take workshops in Japanese arts like ikebana (flower arranging), calligraphy, kimono-wearing, and the tea ceremony.

Head to the Omotesando and Aoyama districts for one of Japan's national pastimes: shopping. Stores that double as contemporary architectural masterpieces lie along the tree-lined main drag Omotesando Dori, including Tadao Ando's **Omotesando Hills mall,** Toyo Ito's building for **Tod's** (a crisscrossed mass of concrete and steel meant











Upper: A 40-foot cypress gate marks the entry to the Meiji Jingu Shrine, where families often don traditional wear for souvenir photos (*lower*). *Opposite:* The 18-room Claska is Tokyo's first boutique hotel.



GO NOW

Nashville After the Storm

Tennessee's capital gets back on its feet after last May's devastating floods. | By JEAN LAWLOR COHEN

EFINED BY the mighty Cumberland River and devastated by it during last May's powerful storms, the "Athens of the South" survives to tell history-rich tales. Among the revived attractions, the inundated **Gaylord Opryland** has reopened after a \$225-million redesign. New restaurants, guestrooms, and the dramatic Cascades lobby reflect the renaissance spirit of spunky Nashvillians. Here are four top to-do's:

LOOK UP TO ART Inside the full-scale replica **Parthenon** at Centennial Park rises "Athena," Alan LeQuire's nearly 42-foot gilded goddess, perhaps the largest indoor sculpture in the Western world. In June, downtown's **Public Square** east of the state capitol got its own artful giants: male and female glass torsos atop steel columns. (The figures rotate when passersby crank their handles.)

TUNE IN Okay, music does rule—from Lower Broadway honky-tonks and blues clubs to the **Grand Ole Opry, Country Music Hall of Fame,** and the acoustically fine **Schermerhorn Symphony Center,** its mechanical equipment restored, its Steinway grands lost to flood damage. But theater happens too—on stage at **Tennessee Performing Arts Center** and at alternative venues like the **Darkhorse.** Current smash: At the bluegrass-blues-BBQ haven **Station Inn** every Tuesday

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HOTEL CENTRAL

One-of-a-Kind New Zealand

From a coastal lodge to a vineyard cottage, these Kiwi inns enhance the destination. | **ByNICOLE ALPER**

REMOTE COUNTRY synonymous with bungee jumping, New Zealand has for decades enjoyed a reputation for thrill-seeking and high-octane adventure. Lesser known are this isolated, two-island country's distinctive lodgings that often capitalize on Kiwiland's varied landscapes.

On the North Island, the **Flying Fox** (from \$158) is set in a grove of century-old walnut trees and surrounded by the Whanganui National Park along the Whanganui River. Guests arrive at the inn by canoe, river taxi, or aerial cableway and stay in one of two hand-built cabins. The Brewers Cottage features a brick floor and views of the river; the James K is a former barn with recycled totara floorboards and volcanic pumice walls. Both cabins are equipped with kitchens, repurposed wood furniture, and cozy quilts.

Play keeper at **The Lighthouse** bed and breakfast (from \$138) located in Island Bay, just 15 minutes from Wellington on the North Island. The three-story lighthouse features a top-floor wraparound balcony with ocean views, and sits across a road from a sandy beach. Less than a mile away, in Houghton Bay, the stone **Keep** (from \$138) offers views of Cook Strait and the South Island mountain ranges from the balcony and tower rooftop, accessible by a hatch door.

A pungent sulfur scent licks your nose the second you touch down in Rotorua, the North Island's hot springs center. The area has 16



At the luxe Lake Okareka Lodge, guest suites each have their own floor.





CHECKING IN

Where to Chill Out

Reserve early for these ice hotels that provide heartwarming comforts in frigid climes. | By DANIEL BORTZ

HÔTEL DE GLACE QUEBEC, CANADA

Hôtel de Glace, the only ice hotel in North America, is made of 15,000 tons of snow and 500 tons of ice. It has 19-foot ceilings and furniture carved out of ice blocks. The hotel will likely attract 140,000 visitors this year with its 36 handcrafted, themed guest rooms. An ice candelabra lit by fiber optics hangs in the lobby. In the café, guests sit on ice chairs cushioned with fur and sip hot chocolate. From \$199.

SORRISNIVA IGLOO HOTEL > ALTA, NORWAY

Built every year along the banks of the Alta River, this ice hotel offers a cold, crisp taste of Norway. The world's northernmost ice hotel boasts an ice chapel with frozen benches draped in animal skins, an ice bar that serves bright blue vodka in ice glasses, and huskies for dogsledding. Beds in the 32 guest rooms are covered with reindeer hide. Glimpse the beauty of the fjords' icy waters aboard a snowmobile. From \$343.

IGLOO VILLAGE > ENGELBERG, SWITZERLAND

Sweeping views of the Swiss Alps and of dark night skies glittering with stars are some of what make the Igloo Village special. Built by Iglu-Dorf, a company with similar villages across the country, a standard igloo can hold up to six guests. Dip bread into a pot of bubbling





Ice carved into inviting spaces include the chandlier-lit ice chapel at the Hotel de Glace in Quebec (upper) and the Icehotel's translucent bar (lower) where bundled-up guests sip warm drinks during happy hour.

FAMILY

Unexpected Florida

Round out your vacation in the Sunshine State with these family-friendly sites | By CHRISTOPHER ELLIOT

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER Walk in the shadows of its awe-inspiring Rocket Garden, conveniently rising next to a playground where little ones can blow off steam. Or strap yourself into the interactive Shuttle Launch Experience, which simulates an actual blastoff. After you lunch with a real astronaut, visit the nearby **U.S. Astronaut Hall of Fame,** a great place to cool your jets after a day of sightseeing in Central Florida.

FLORIDA KEYS The Conch Republic, as the Keys are known, may be only a half-day drive from Central Florida, but it might as well be on another planet, with its abandoned railway bridges—some used for biking and fishing—that stretch across azure waters. Key Largo's snorkeling opportunities in John Pennekamp Coral Reef State Park are unlike any others in the continental U.S. On a good day, you'll lose yourself in a school of butterflyflsh or parrotfish along a vibrant coral reef. Most of the park is underwater but can easily be enjoyed from a dive boat or on a glass-bottom boat tour. If your kids are advanced divers, check out the U.S.S. *Spiegel Grove*, a navy transport ship sunk nearby as an artificial reef.

MIAMI The kid-friendly **Miami Seaquarium**, a 38-acre marine life—themed park, features sea lions, killer whales, dolphins, and interactive





Florida goes beyond theme parks with attractions such as Sanibel Island (upper) where shellseekers roam the beach and the Showcase of Citrus (lower) that offers groves of tangerines and oranges to pick.

ROAD TRIP

Lost Cities on the Ruta Maya

Visit ancient kingdoms to glimpse massive temples and pyramids set in pristine jungles | By ELAINE GLUSAC

N MEXICO'S Yucatán Peninsula, tourists have long beaten paths to Maya ruins such as Chichén Itzá and Tulum, important remains of the preconquest civilization of accomplished astronomers, mathematicians, architects, and warriors. But for those looking to play Indiana Jones and uncover ruined cities still largely tangled in jungle, Highway 186 calls. This little-traveled corridor spanning the extreme south of Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula is dotted with ruins lacking the manicure, or restrictions, of Chichén Itzá, where visitors are prohibited from climbing the great temple. And unlike Tulum, no shopping malls flank their entries and exits. Instead, nature and culture fuse at these largely deserted excavations, perhaps more popular with howler monkeys and toucans than tourists.

ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS For most travelers, the four-or-more-days trip starts with renting a car at the Cancún airport. The route can be divided into two major sections: Highway 307 from Cancún to Chetumal on the Belize border, then Highway 186 west for roughly a hundred miles to Escárcega in Campeche.

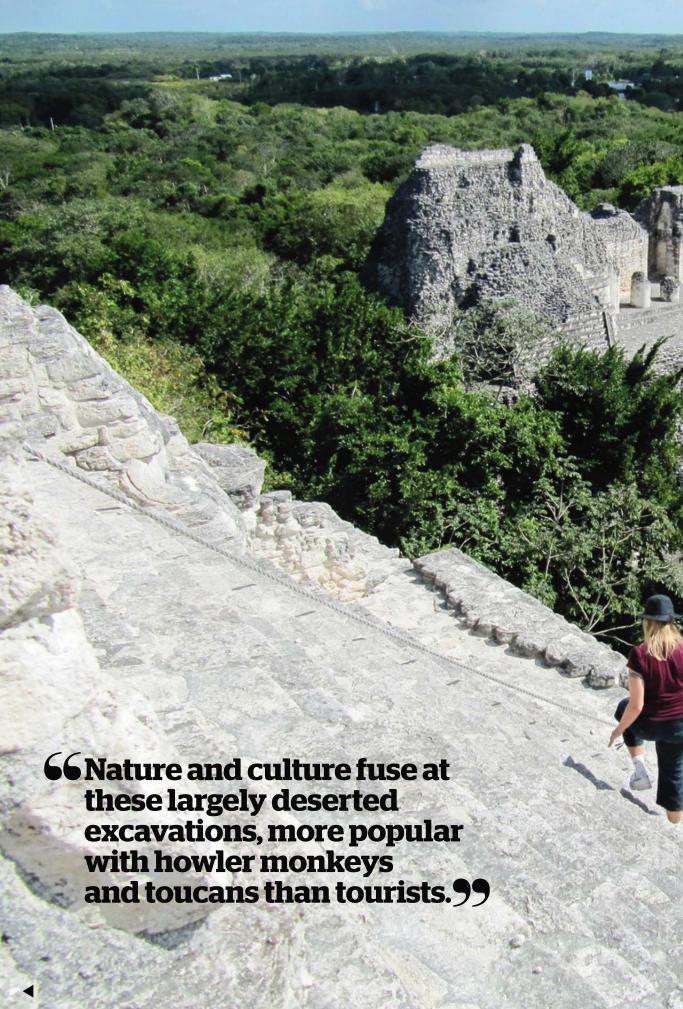
From the dark forest flanking 307, approach Laguna Bacalar, which the Maya called the Lake of Seven Colors. Linked to the sea by mangrove channels, the ribbon-like, 35-mile body of water ranges from pale aqua to midnight blue. To counter coastal pirates who hid

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PORT OF CALL

Colombia's Caribbean Gem

Explore the colonial port town of Cartagena with these four off-the-boat excursions. | By EVERETT POTTER

ITH COLOMBIA'S drug-related violence mostly a thing of the past, the old Caribbean port town of Cartagena—arguably the finest colonial city in the Western Hemisphere—contributes to a broader Colombian reawakening, attracting a crowd of global style-seekers. This city of gold and pirates has long been on the itinerary of cruise ships transiting the Panama Canal during the October-to-April cruising season.

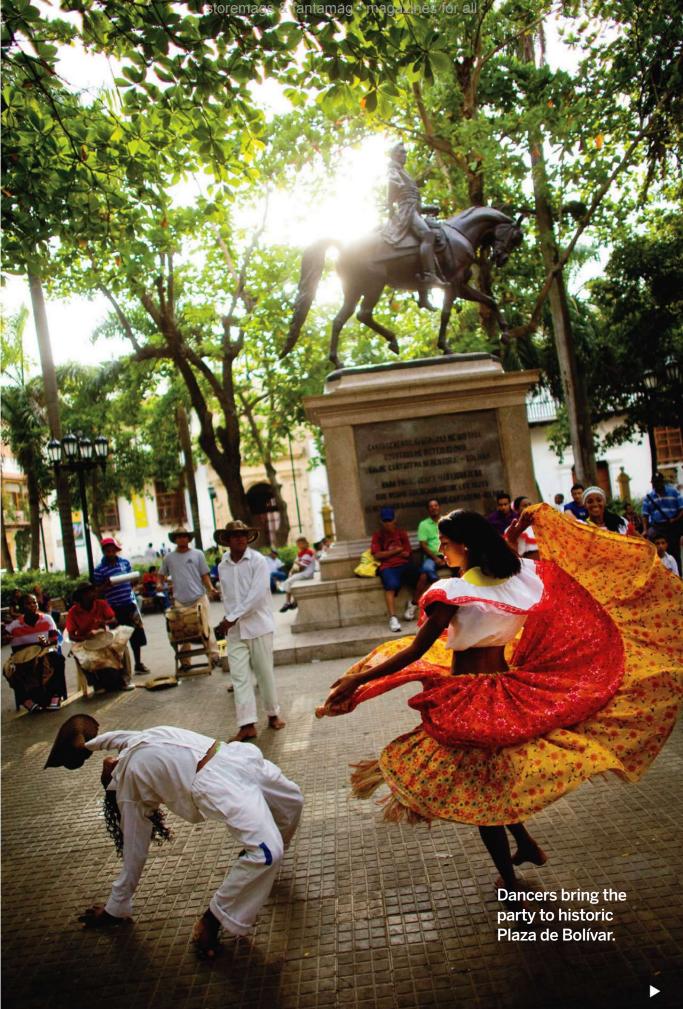
AROUND THE OLD CITY 3 hours

Walk through Cartagena's walled district, especially El Centro, to find most of the historic plazas, churches, and museums. This maze of a neighborhood brims with 16th- and 17th-century mansions, festooned with flower-filled balconies. But more sober reminders of the city's past remain, like **Plaza de los Coches**, site of the largest slave market in the New World.

THE MUSEUM BEAT 90 minutes

Cartagena's best museums all lie within a short walk of each other in the walled city and are small enough to be seen in a brief visit. The **Museo de Arte Moderno** has ongoing exhibitions of contemporary Colombian artists. The **Gold Museum** in the Plaza de Bolívar stores a trove of pre-Columbian gold in its baroque mansion.

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ADVENTURE

In Search of Moby Dick

Multi-day whale-watching expeditions allow entry into the world of the ocean giants. | Byscott sanders

ROM NEW ENGLAND to New Zealand, short whale-watching cruises can offer a rich experience. If you're left wanting more, sign up for a multi-day itinerary in the heart of whale territory. At their best, these trips can be "soul-rejuvenating and life-changing," says Nancy Mertz of Sea Kayak Adventures. The best time to go varies by area.

JOHNSTONE STRAIT, CANADA Whale researchers flock to this area off British Columbia, home to the world's only orca (killer whale) preserve. Near these sheltered waters, kayak alongside a pod of orcas as they feed. **Sea Kayak Adventures** offers four- to six-day trips that maximize whale time; you'll sleep in comfortable tents on the beach.

BAJA, MEXICO Whales of several species abound in the waters around this peninsula, but it is the friendly grays along the Pacific coast that offer a unique experience from late January through early March. The giant creatures often come alongside whale-watching skiffs. **Sea & Adventures** offers several options in Magdalena Bay (www.kayakbaja.com).

AZORES, PORTUGAL If returning to a simple island B&B after a day on North Atlantic waters in search of resident sperm whales has appeal, consider the six- to ten-day trips offered by **Whale Watch Azores** on catamarans with only 12 guests.



Baja, Mexico: Though some people touch the whales, it's best not to.

EXPERIENCE

The Dinner Hour

What one family learned from hunter-gatherers on the shores of Tanzania's Lake Eyasi. | By JEANNIE RALSTON

S NJEGELA-SAITOTI raised the bow over his head and pulled the arrow back, I was shocked by my atypically bloodthirsty thought: Kill the monkey. And when that arrow and a slew of others missed their moving mark in the canopy above, I was just as surprised by how my reaction differed from that of the chief elder and his companions.

My husband and I had brought our sons, ages 13 and 11, to northern Tanzania to spend a day with the Hadza as part of our year traveling and homeschooling.

The Hadza, whose homeland includes the Great Rift Valley, are one of the last functioning hunter-gatherer tribes in the world. They sleep in twig huts and eat only food they find or kill. They do not raise animals or grow crops, preferring to roam free to follow the chow. Because the land they've long ranged over is being lost to encroachment by the modern world, fewer than a thousand Hadza still adhere to the traditional lifestyle today.

Our day started at 6 a.m., when our guide brought us to a clearing in the bush near shallow Lake Eyasi, where marabou storks pace the shoreline like professors deep in thought. This was the camp of one Hadza clan—the elder, Njegela-Saitoti; his teenage son; two other men; and two women. The shirtless men were smoking the tobacco-like leaves from a khaki bush—a ritual to bring hunting luck—and



Taking aim: A hunter scans the tree canopy in northern Tanzania.





ľm

walking along a sun-dappled Barbados beach, gazing at a knot of fishing boats bobbing like ducks on the turquoise

sea. A family picnicking nearby waves me over and invites me to a meal of flying fish washed down with Barbadian rum. As we talk, I tell them how lucky they are to live on this lovely island. My host, David Smith, interrupts me to say Barbados is not an island at all. Being the guest, I play along. "Okay then, what is it?"

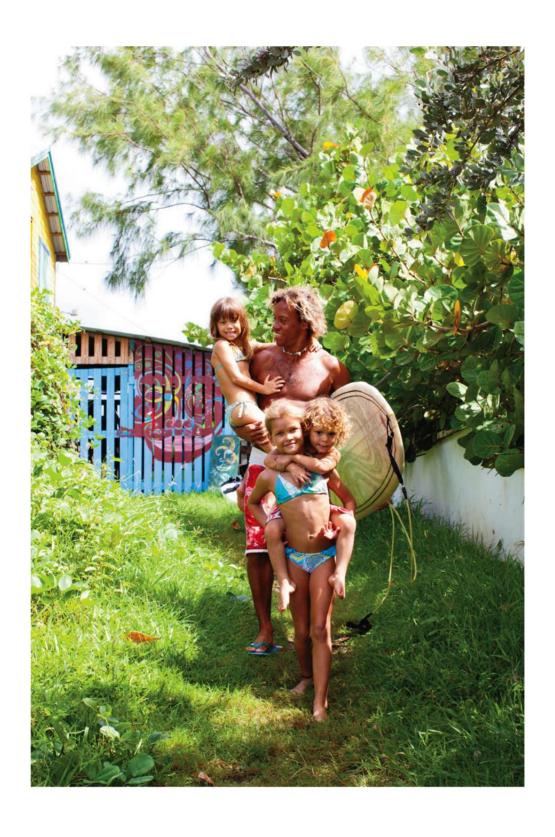
"We're a continent," he says, throwing his arms to the sky, "because our hearts are so big!" Then he laughs.

A real Barbadian laugh is a seismic event. It begins deep in the belly, gains resonance as it rolls





A real Barbadian laugh is **a seismic event. It begins deep in the belly,** gains resonance as it rolls upward, then bursts out as a roar.















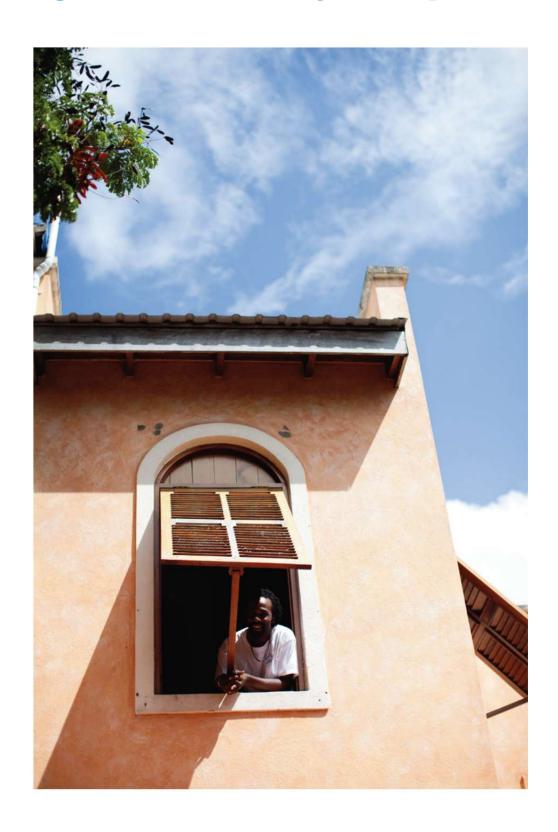
"We Bajans meet on common ground, **eat the same food,** listen to the same music," Hoad says. "It gives you a real nice together feeling."







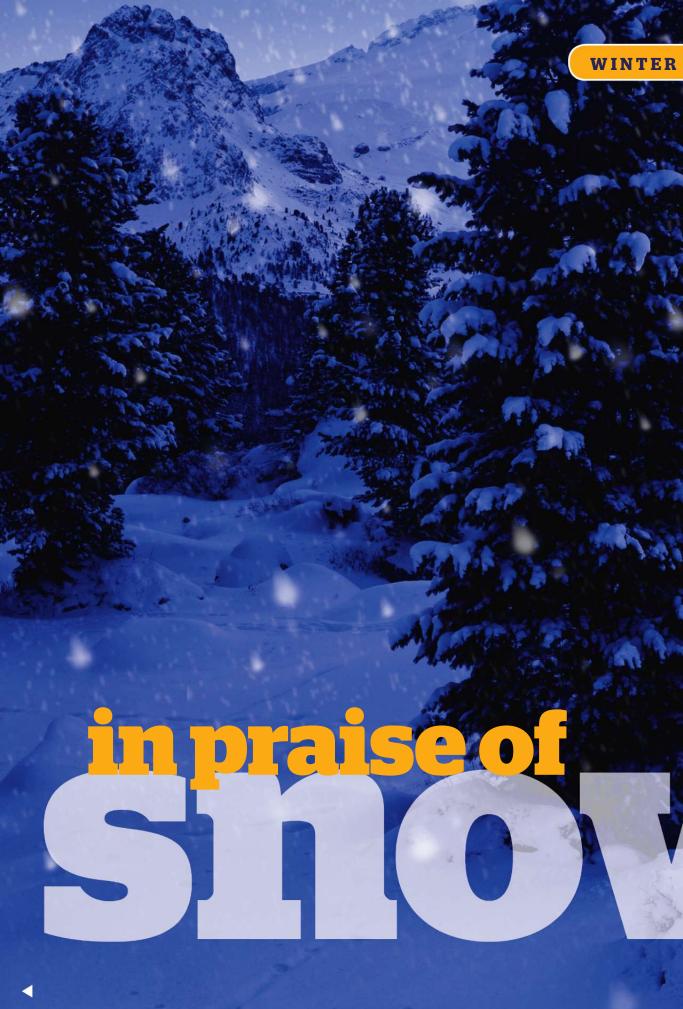
I'm nursing a growing hunch that a lot of Barbados circumvents **the "little England" thing in favor** of a homegrown *esprit d'île*.













INTRODUCTION | BY KEITH BELLOWS

HERE IT IS AGAIN, the snow. Heaped six inches high on my bedcovers, drifting around my pillow. My mother has done it again—opened the window in the middle of the night. ("Fresh air breeds strong children," she would tell me when I complained about her habit.) All of seven years old, I'm at our holiday chalet in Sainte-Adèle in the heart of Quebec's ski-mecca Laurentian Mountains. Overnight, we've been blessed with two feet of fresh snow, which, added to the three we already have, brings it almost to the bottom of the upstairs windows. The temperature is about minus 10°F. Later, after I've scampered across the frigid wood floor and pulled on layers of clothes, I sip hot chocolate in front of a blast furnace of a fireplace.

I grew up like this, a skater, skier, snow-god lover. And when I had kids, I determined that they would learn to love winter, too. I remember when my eldest son first got the bug, at age five. It was pouring rain at our Tennessee cabin on the backside of Great Smoky Mountains National Park. I had just brought in some wood. We were watching TV when a banner crawled across the screen with a snow alert.

Within an hour, huge wet flakes dusted the grass. I was overjoyed; my son was fascinated. We drifted off to sleep as the embers in the fireplace winked out. When I awoke, I flicked the light switch. Nothing. Then I tried the TV. Nothing. As I staggered about in the darkness, I realized the power was out.



We were de any settlem what would

By the ti six days we gave out aft together "si socks, two s we could ba



eep in a holler on a tiny back road 15 miles from lent. Sunrise told the tale: We were in the grip of become known as the Blizzard of '93.

me it petered out, five feet of snow had fallen. For were without electricity. The batteries in the radio er a day. My son spent hours outside in a cobblednowsuit" of rain boots, parka, layers of clothes and weaters, and a hat and scarf. The snow was so deep arely trudge the few hundred feet to the SUV, which Scandinave Spa in Quebec's popular ski resort town of Mont-Tremblant offers a menu of Scandinavian hot baths, saunas, and massages.

Loading

NARRAGANSETT

Best Surfed Cold

Join the few and the brave on a Rhode Island beach. Surfer Peter "Pan" leads the way.

am having difficulty breathing as Peter Panagiotis drives his van—surfboards and a heap of other gear tossed inside—past lifeless beach cottages. My heart hammers with anticipation, true, but I've also accidentally smeared Vaseline up my nose; Panagiotis had me slather the goop on my exposed face for added insulation. The waves here in Narragansett Bay are perfect, but February's water temperature remains 32°F,

and mist rises from three feet of snow. Three cars are parked where the street ends, their surf racks empty. In summer, the street would be full.

"The weather chops the crowd factor down to nuthin'," says Panagiotis, better known in surfing circles as Pan because he's like a big kid when it comes to waves. "And that's right where I like it."

Surfers brave winter all along the East Coast (hot spots include the north Jersey Shore and the Outer Banks of North Carolina), but Rhode Island, often anemic in summer, is home



to some of to snow, cover gansett Sur beach the manner forms of war

I wade i ing, and the strokes and and then fli season. —*R*



the East's best winter waves. We crunch through the red head to toe in wet suit. (Pan, owner of Narraf & Skate, will rent you a board and gear.) On the point turns to thick fog, but through it I see the ghostly waves marching shoreward, lovely smooth gray walls. Into the water. As I paddle I am already warmen a wave rears out of the mist. I take four quick hop to my feet. There is a moment's weightlessness ght. Any surfer knows the joy, no matter what the Ken McAlpine

Cold Fact
Fresh snow is
90-95% air and
weighs about
6 lbs. per cubic ft.





MAINE

An Old-Time Ice Harvest

A New England tradition lives on in a few stalwart places. Grab a handsaw and pitch in.

I'm driving along a winding, ice-covered, backcountry road. I'm on my way to a remote hunting camp in northwestern Maine to experience a once quintessential Maine activity: an ice harvest. In the days before electric refrigeration, ice cut from New England's rivers and lakes

was a global commodity that could end up in an ice chest in Shanghai or a daiquiri in Havana. The ice industry is gone, but a few steadfast camps remain. Cobb's Pierce Pond Camp harvests pond ice for use in its visitors' coolers and drinks throughout the summer. When I reach the pond, participants are in a festive mood, keeping warm by carving out huge cakes of ice with two-handed saws.

A more accessible ice harvest open to the public takes place every February at the Thompson Ice House Museum in South Bristol. Arrive by 7:30 or 8 a.m. to watch seasoned volunteers wield a sled-mounted circular saw that cuts deep into the ice, which can reach a thickness of 22 inches. Don't expect to stand



around: Ha encouraged to guide th that feeds t Register of is over, with much as 30 salt marsh

To taste aum's annua Bar crunch winter's har



It o ply the antique handsaws and ice hooks used to ply the antique handsaws and ice hooks used to floating blocks to the cradle-and-pulley system the ice into the ice house (placed on the National Historic Places in 1974). By 3 p.m., the harvest in several hundred blocks of ice, each weighing as 0 pounds, stacked in the ice house and covered in thay for insulation.

the fruit of your labors, return in July for the muselice-cream social, serving ice cream (coffee–Heath is a perennial favorite) made from the previous evest. —*Whit Richardson* Cold Fact
One shovelful
of wet snow can
weigh more than
20 pounds.



Editors' Picks

66 New Year's Eve in Reykjavi Locals gather at huge bonfires over town, lighting up the sky

66 A horse-drawn carriage ride along it's snowing turns Chicago into a wint warm up with a cup of red snapper so in The Drake Hotel. 99 – Susan O'Keefe, asso

on a brittle winter day perks up all the senses. Boots echo on cobblestones; bookstore doors open to exhale puffs of warmth. Later, let that heated pub or tearoom lure you in for a cup of milky Earl Grey. 99

-Amy Alipio, associate editor

ik, Iceland, brings warmth to an otherwise chilly locale. to sing folk songs. At midnight, they set off fireworks all in all directions. 99—Scott Stuckey, managing editor

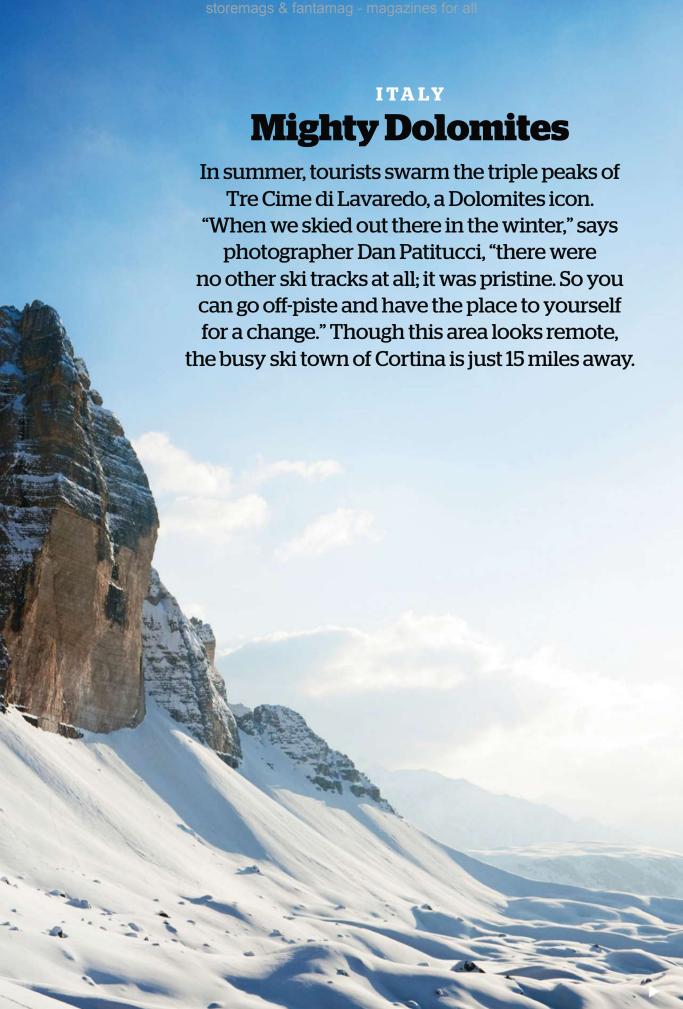
the Magnificent Mile when er wonderland. Afterward, oup at the Cape Cod Room

ciate editor

nadian Inuit dogs and snow e a perfect match. To sled through y forests and along frozen lakes these magnificent animals is winss. Wintergreen Dogsled Lodge Minnesota, offers a seriously fun day dogsledding trip.

—Sheila Buckmaster, editor at large





ALASKA

Snowshoers' Heaven

Solitude and awe-inspiring views in the coastal town of Haines have us saying "hallelujah!"

ost folks think of backcountry heliskiing as the signature winter adventure in Alaska's coastal mountain ranges. But my town, tiny Haines, Alaska, offers an alternative: a snowshoe hike on Mount Ripinsky.

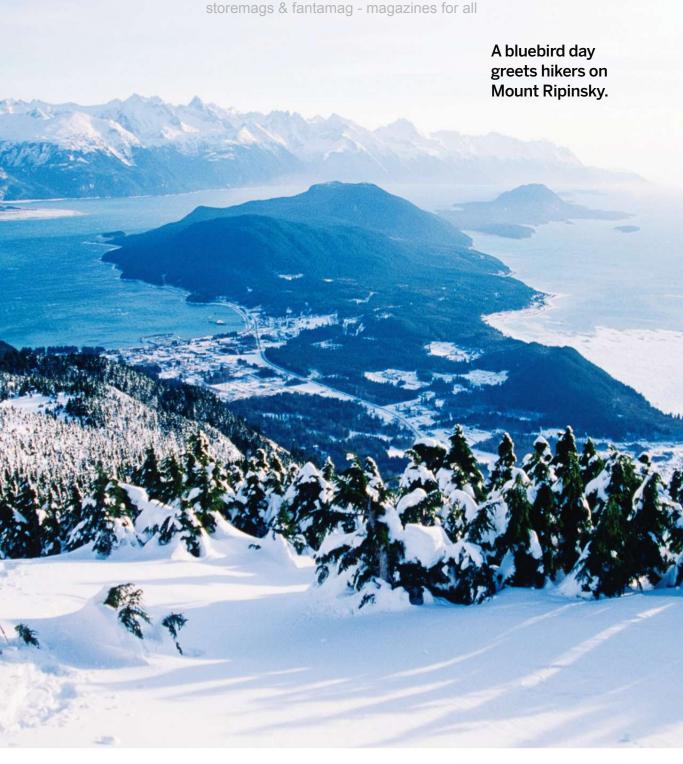
Winter is my favorite time to explore the 3,690-foot mountain right behind town. (Find the trailhead a few blocks from the Pioneer Bar.) Bears lie sleeping in their dens; deep snow smooths out the rugged trails and buries brush so that you can walk almost anywhere and, thanks to the tracks you leave, not get too lost.

The snowshoeing is world-class but practiced only by a few hardy locals who will be happy to show you around. Ask for local snowshoer Greg Schlachter of adventure travel company Expedition Broker. Plan a snowshoe day if you come for the eagle viewing in late November or heli-skiing in the spring, but December to April is the prime snowshoeing season.

Winter snow and rain can make Alaska's panhandle miser-



able, but w mountain. Ociers, and fi slopes of M hemlock treated above the treated to quite to



hen it's raining in the harbor, it's snowing on the Clear days provide glorious views of mountains, glaords. On the stormiest mornings, stick to the lower ount Ripinsky. They're sheltered by tall spruce and ees. But on bluebird days or moonlit nights, head ee line, where you can see for miles down the fjord—Russia but almost to Juneau. —Heather Lende

Cold Fact
Snowiest U.S.
place: Mount
Rainier, WA (500700 inches/yr.).

My Winter Best

Favorite experiences from notable snow fans.

66In San Diego I once had half an inch of snow on my lawn. I immediately ran out and made snowballs. 99—John Coleman, founder of the Weather Channel

66 My first time riding Alaska's knew my desire to pursue fresother dimension. 99 – Seth Wescott

66 I kite ski with friends on the frozen Arctic Ocean, near Baffin Island. **99**

-Sarah McNair Landry, polar guide



66 Cochrane, Ontario, has been one of my favorite snow crystal photography spots for years; the winds are usually very light?

-Kenneth Libbrecht, snowflake photographer

s fabled Chugach mountain range, I h tracks had been taken to a whole

tt, Olympic snowboarder

Growing up in Canada, call playing hockey on the Lawrence River, slapshots appearing over the ice floes.

-Wade Davis, NG explorer in residence





was perfect for my large-scale artwork: I had plenty of room, there was low snowfall, and when you pushed the snow away, the ice provided a very dark blackish-blue contrast. \$9

—Jim Denevan, landscape artist

Loading

Log On, Chill Out

Readers from Facebook, Twitter, and our Intelligent Travel blog helped us pick ten top towns for deep-freeze fun.

1 New York City

"Snow-chilled air quiets the streets, hushing the city into stillness." — @SabinaLohr

Minnesota "The minute the lakes freeze over, out come the speed skaters, the ice fishing houses, the wind gliders. Then the winter carnivals arrive and the joggers with trail shoes and ice-laden beards."

-Theresa Sprenger Dunn

3 Lake Placid, New York

"On a cold winter's eve you can stay warm by skating

on an Olympic speed skating track, sharing it with speed skaters on one side and local kids and families on the other."

_twinpeaks (via blog)

4 Granada, Spain

"The unchanging Alhambra is always magnificent with the Sierra Nevada mountains full of snow in the background."

-Yolanda Garcia

5 Boston, Massachusetts

"A fresh snowfall makes every activity more enjoyable, whether it's skating in



Boston Comning the Esplan

6 Dortmund,

"Everybody w drinking *gluht* wine] in stock cups even tho freezing out."

West Yellow Montana "Sno



non or walklade.''

-Lauri Lannan

Germany

vas outside
vein [mulled
ing-shaped
ugh it was

John (via blog)

vstone, ow starts in October. Folks snowshoe, ski, or snowmobile to work on streets that are groomed, not plowed, in the winter."

-Jan (via blog)

8 Boulder, Colorado

"Ski the nearby mountains in the morning; bike ride in Boulder in the afternoon!"

_@coolblueice

Green Bay, Wisconsin

"Cheese curds, brats,

Kroll's restaurant, ice fishing, camping, and da Packers!" — Chad Veley

10 Washington, D.C.

We may be biased, but the nation's capital has our vote for winter's capital too. Why? When we get blanketed with three feet of snow (as we did last year), bipartisan camaraderie and friendly snowball fights break out all over town. — The Editors

JAPAN

Super-Sized Sculptures

With giant Godzillas, Sapporo's Snow Festival puts your frontyard snowman to shame.

ello Kitty casts an intimidating shadow when she is eight feet tall and carved from solid ice. At this scale, she is a worthy opponent even for Godzilla, who stands beside her amid a wintry scene of wanton destruction. But here in Japan, cuteness ultimately prevails. Thickly insulated toddlers waddle like penguins in front of a hyper-realistic Mickey Mouse snow-

man. Their march is set to the rhythm of syrupy-sweet pop ballads, cranked out with gusto by skiwear-clad musicians on a frozen stage. In the distance lies an Arctic village, complete with life-size igloos, icicle forests, and sculptures of prancing reindeer.

Welcome to the Sapporo Snow Festival (www.snowfes.com/english), an annual February tradition that celebrates life in the northern latitudes, particularly in this capital of the island of Hokkaido and the fourth largest city in Japan.

Taking a cue from the locals, I battle the elements with a shot of warm sake and chase it with the obligatory swig of Sapporo



lager. My sismells of spand butter-crowds, I we Tokachi wi maybe it's slips into me to night as a pastel hues.

Hello Kitty

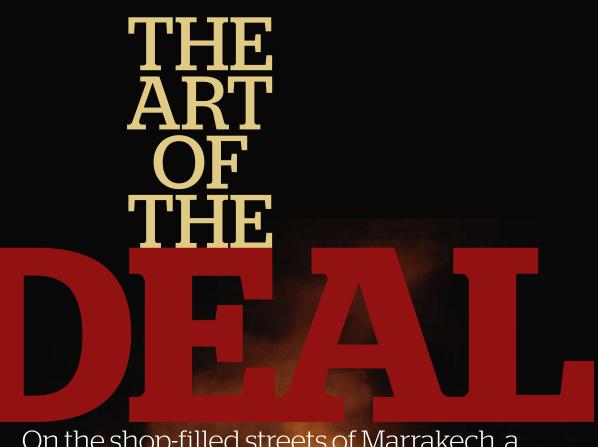


tomach growls in protest. I follow the intoxicating pit-roasted lamb, barbecued scallops, boiled crabs, topped ramen noodles. Elbow to elbow with the ash my feast down with steaming mugs of mulled ne. The surge of calories warms from within—or the disposable hand warmers that a friendly local y gloves. Before long, the sun-starved sky gives way thousands of spotlights flood the fairgrounds with The light is particularly flattering to the super-sized, who is now bathed in shimmering pink.

—Matthew D. Firestone

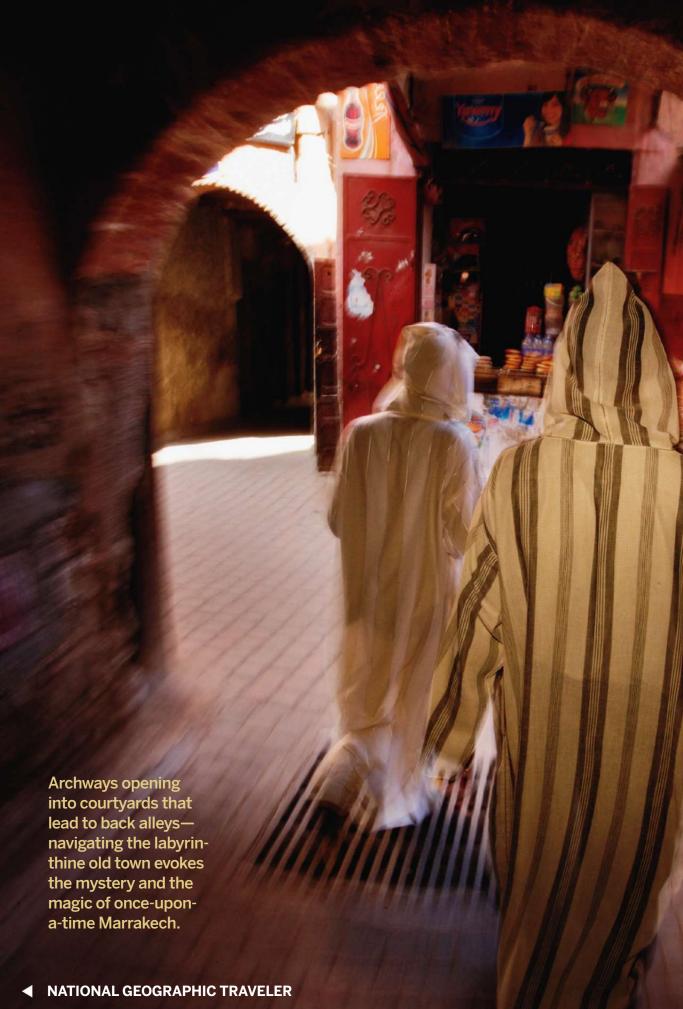
Cold Fact
Japanese snow
monkeys, or
macaques, roll
snowballs for fun.





On the shop-filled streets of Marrakech, a father and son learn how to bargain from some of the best bargainers in the world.







"Bezaf!" Sambarks.

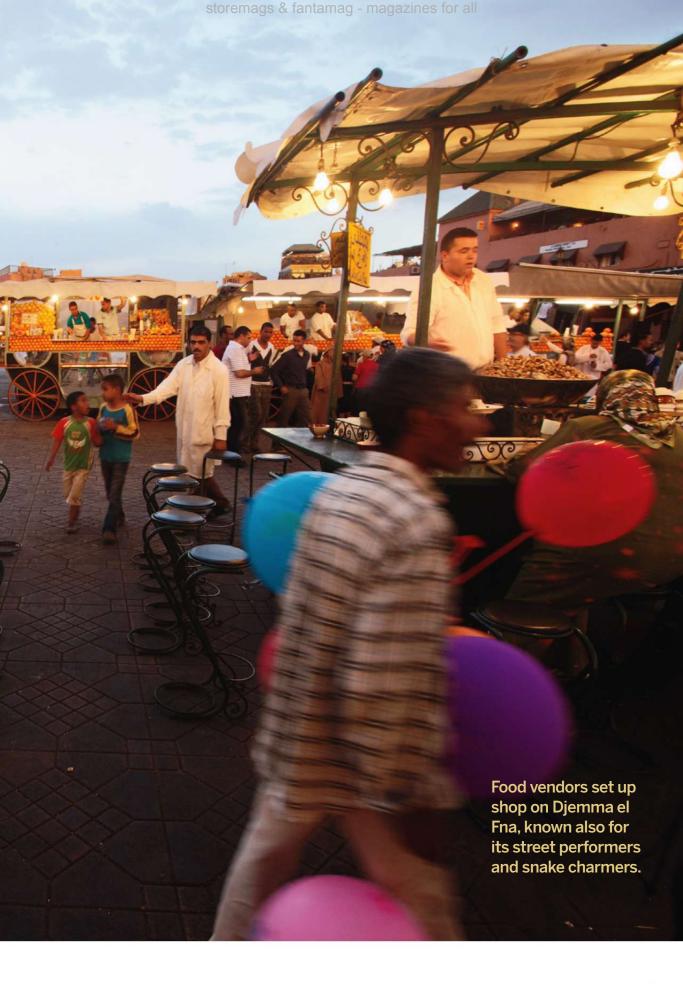
The soft-featured merchant cocks his head. He looks over to his shop assistant. A smile plays on the corners of the younger man's lips. ¶ The merchant turns back to Sam. "What did you say?" ¶ "Bezaf"—too much—Sam repeats, shaking his head and looking down at the small chest the two are haggling over. It is perhaps 18 inches by 9, decorated with henna-dyed camel bone, trimmed with an ornate copper border. It's a beauty. ¶ Sam begins to sway side to side. He lifts one foot, then the other.

"Okay. Then give me 2,500 dirham [\$310] for it," the merchant says. He is wearing a pair of bright yellow, point-toed *babouches*—traditional Moroccan men's slippers.

Sam's swaying turns into twisting, then squirming. He looks over at me. He shrugs. I shrug. He shakes his head. Without another word he marches his four-foot-three-inch frame past me and out onto Rue Riad Zitoun el-Jedid, deep in the Mellah section of Marrakech. Once safely away from the shop he stops, turns to me, and lifts his blue eyes from under his bangs. "That was a

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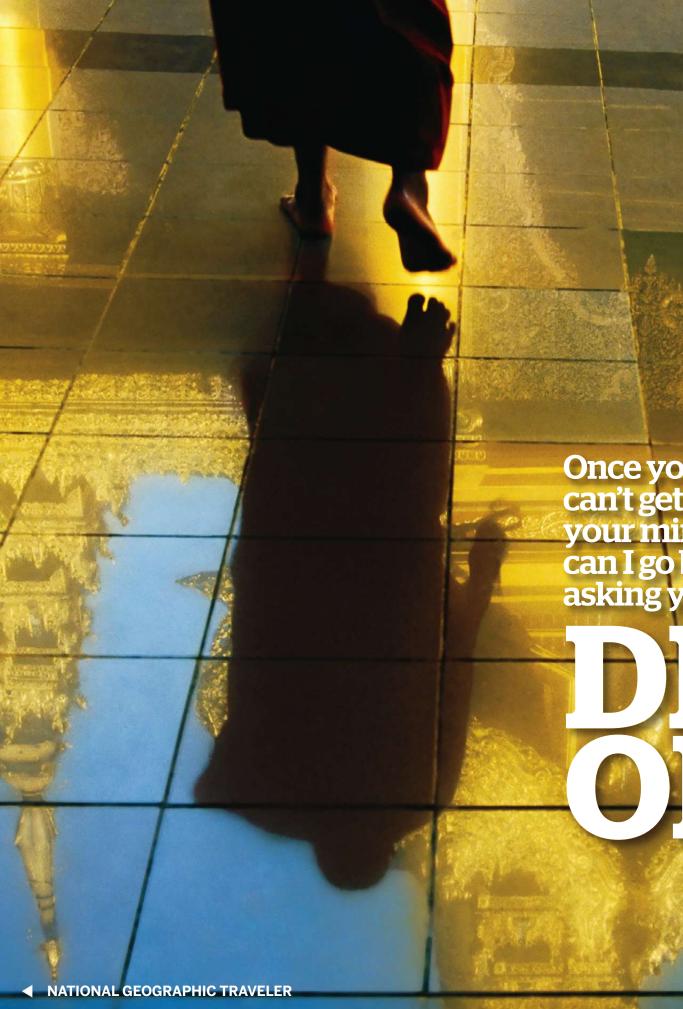


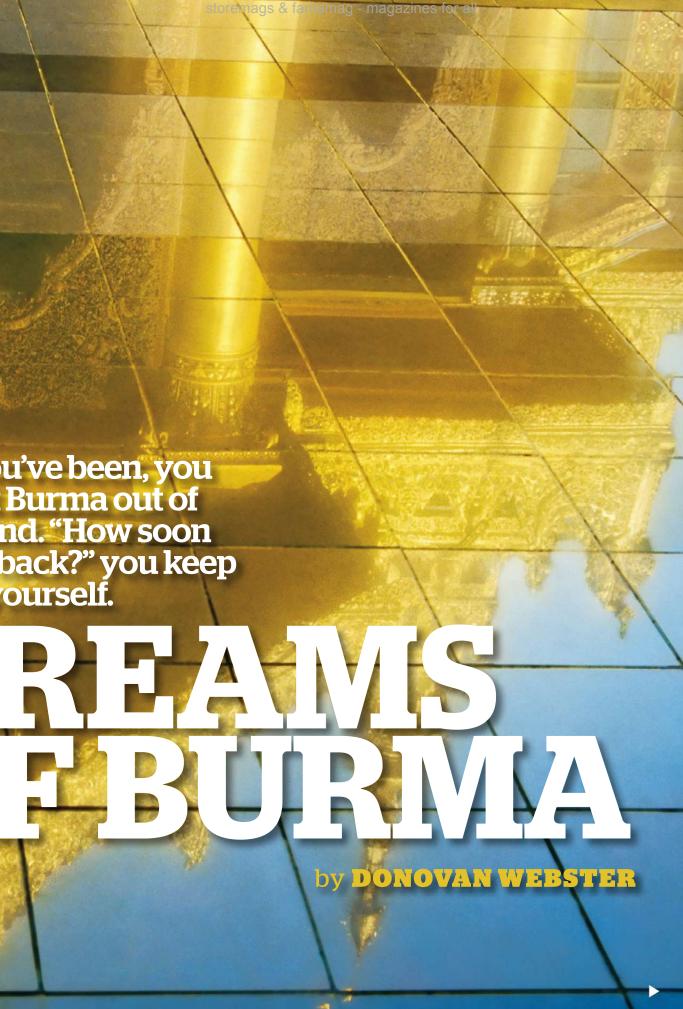
"I'll take 1,800 dirham," Khalid says. "A thousand." Sam responds. Neither blinks. Then what happens next happens fast.

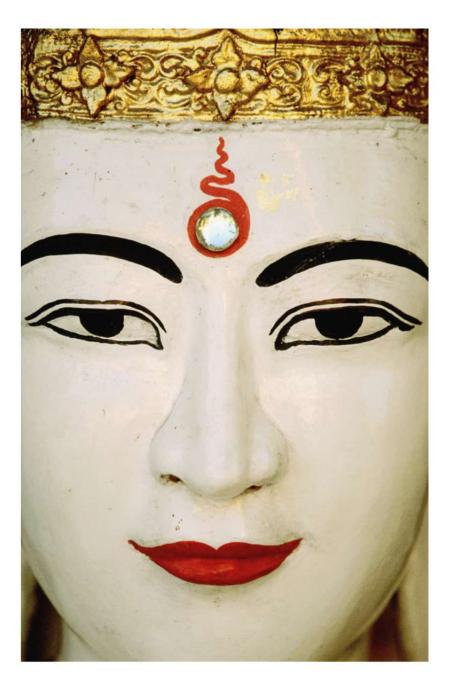
> Tribal treasure, an ornamental dagger represents just one of the finds in a shop the author visits with his son.











A statue of Buddha greets visitors to the Shwedagon pagoda in Rangoon. *Previous page:* A Buddhist monk steps across reflective tiles before a pagoda in Burma, a beguiling Southeast Asian nation hunkered down beneath a military dictatorship.

LAMENT THAT BURMA HAS BEEN lost to many in the travel world. Now that opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been released by the country's military dictatorship, however, more travelers may aspire to visit this magical place. Personally, I would go back tomorrow, if only to support the populace with my tourist dollars. To me, Burma—Myanmar, officially—is among the world's most seductive destinations, the kind of land that, after you've been, inhabits your dreams. Events from my many trips there drift through my memories, like a candle-powered paper balloon floating across a star-filled sky....

OUR WHOLE GRILLED FISH emerged from the kitchen in a redolent roil of woodsmoke. The skin was scored with diagonal cuts, the white flesh showing through, steaming and flaky. Netted only hours before, the fish rested on a platter of cool, shiny green banana leaves. And it was arriving right on cue.

We'd finished our beef kebabs, chopsticks dunking the last grilled cubes into orange plastic bowls. In one bowl was a tongue-nipping mix of vinegar, crushed green chilies, and shredded leaves and roots. The other held a cooling combination of yogurt, honey, and just a little mustard. The flavors mingled with the view, which stretched to infinity from this Misty hills punctuated by zedis make for a common landscape in a country dominated by three mountain ranges.





PHOTO CONTRACTOR OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPER









or the fifth year, *Traveler* paired its photo contest with that of *Photo District News* (*PDN*), an award-winning magazine for professional photographers. More than 3,700 amateur shooters entered some 11,000 images in the 2010 World in Focus competition—our 22nd annual photo contest. The pictures cap-

ONTEST JERS

IN FOCUS]









tured an assortment of the places, wildlife, and people that make our travels memorable, evoking a sense of delight or discovery—or both. The three prize winners (awarded trips) and seven merit winners (awarded cameras) are showcased here. We salute the winners and invite you to enjoy their images.





"Mist-ified" **Brittany Brothers of** Brooklyn, New York, photographed herself at Iguazú Falls on the border of Brazil and Argentina. Water flow was heavy due to recent rainfall, and most in the tour group were afraid to walk out to stand beside the thundering falls. Not Brothers. "I snapped this picture mid-run back to the trail after being completely drenched—even that poncho couldn't keep the water out," she says. Back at the hotel. Brothers plugged her camera into a computer to view the photos. "This picture instantly brought back the moment."

(GoPro Standard Def Wide HERO digital camera in waterproof housing, 170-degree lens, exposure at 1/13 second, f/3.6)

PRIZE: ten-day expedition to the Galápagos Islands aboard National Geographic Endeavour or Islander (courtesy of National Geographic Expeditions) and a \$250 certificate from Canson Infinity media.



"Temples of Kathmandu" Larry Louie of Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, photographed the Tripureshwar Mahadev Mandir Temple in the slums of Nepal's capital city, just steps from where people live under bridges. "Most foreign tourists are warned away from Kathmandu, told this is a

chaotic city fa is still old bea to the scene burning throu to its surroun



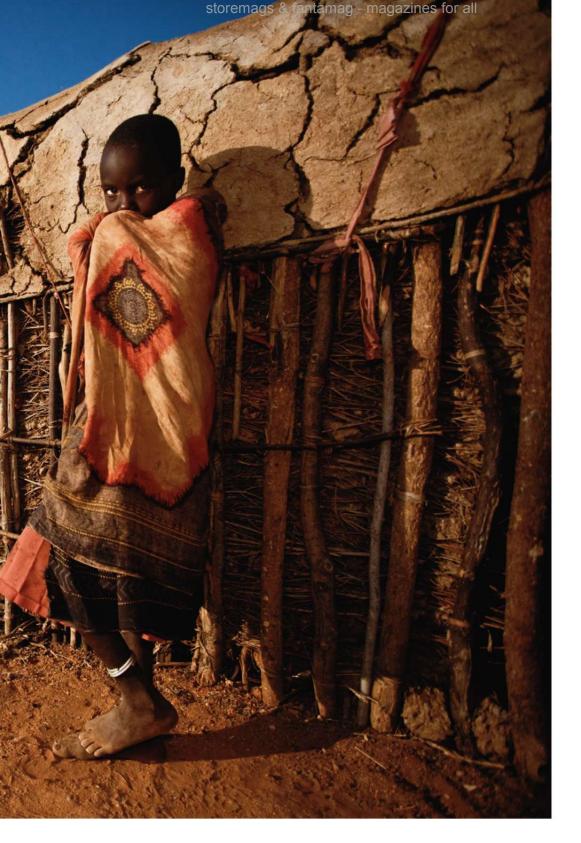
illing apart," he says. "This photo shows there nuty here, even in the slums." He was drawn by the flying birds, backlit by the sunrise ugh the fog. "The scene was such a contrast ddings."

(Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 24-105mm lens at 24mm, exposure at 1/125 second, f/11, ISO 400) **PRIZE:** seven-day/six-night stay for two in Waikiki, Hawaii, courtesy of Aqua Hotels & Resorts.



"Connection" Robin Moore of Washington, D.C., visited a small Samburu village in Kenya's Rift Valley. "There were a half dozen huts made of sticks and mud," he says. "I was captivated by this girl's body language." The child, who was partially hiding her face, looked back at Moore, transfixed.

"As I raised m her photo, he "This image between me, from my own



y camera and gestured to ask if I could take r gaze didn't falter," says the photographer. captures that moment of mutual curiosity a foreigner, and a world so very different

(Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 17-40mm lens at 17mm, exposure at 1/5000 second, f/4, ISO 400) **PRIZE:** intensive, 2½-day photography course at Santa Fe Workshops.





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MERIT

Timofey Tararin of Moscow, Russia, found this waterfall at Plitvice Lakes National Park in Croatia on a rainy afternoon. "It was cold outside," he recalls. "I was soaking wet and hungry, but I couldn't help taking pictures, being mesmerized by the stunning splendor of the place." He used a long exposure time to turn the waterfall into wisps and make the pool appear glassy and flat.

(Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 17-40mm lens at 21mm, exposure at ten seconds, f/10, ISO 160)

PRIZE FOR ALL MERIT WINNERS: Nikon L100 Coolpix camera or equivalent, \$100 B&H gift card, and a \$100 certificate from Canson Infinity media.

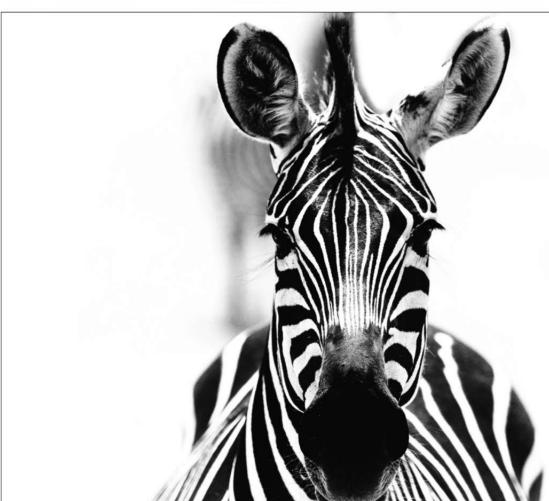


MERIT

Lida Chaulet of Zoetermeer, Netherlands, photographed this cycling nun in Lucca, Italy, while walking to her car. "As a tourist, I had my camera around my neck, and I was able to focus in seconds," she says. Chaulet panned the camera with the moving bicycle so that the background would blur while the nun and guitar remained sharp.

(Canon EOS 1DS digital camera, 28-135mm lens at 50mm, exposure at 1/30 second, f/5.6, ISO 250)





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MERIT

Anna Bogusz of New York City first shot this room in the City Palace Museum of Udaipur, India, empty. Later, she noticed a guard sitting by the window and quickly took another shot. "As an architect, I love photographing structures, shapes, and colors, but people, especially their faces, are what I find most compelling," she says.

(Canon PowerShot SD960 IS digital camera, 5-20mm lens at 5mm, exposure at 1/60 second, f/2.8, ISO 125)

MERIT

Robin Moore of Washington, D.C., got this close-up of a zebra glancing at him in Tanzania's Ruaha National Park. "The early afternoon sun created a dramatic contrast," he says, "and allowed me to blow out the background and render a black-and-white image that highlights the zebra's striking markings without distraction."

(Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 100-400mm lens at 400mm, exposure at 1/3200 second, f/5.6, ISO 320)





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MERIT

Marjorie Lang of Paris, France, was en route to a festival in Udaipur, India, when she saw this happy girl in motion, delightfully backlit. "She was just there, singing and dancing barefoot in a narrow blue street with her orange dress," Lang says. "There is nothing spectacular or unusual about the photograph, but I believed in the beauty of the simple moment."

(Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 24-70mm lens at 70mm, exposure at 1/125 second, f/4, ISO 100)



MERIT

Weixin Shen of Nanjing, China, and his wife were looking for a place to have dinner in Delhi, India, when they came upon a secondhand bookstore. "The owner was trying to make room for his new arrivals," Shen says. Though initially attracted to the wall of books, Shen decided that including the people on the periphery of the scene added layers to the composition and gave the feeling that "you were right there."

(Nikon D200 digital camera, 12-24mm lens at 13mm, exposure at 1/100 second, f/4, ISO 400)



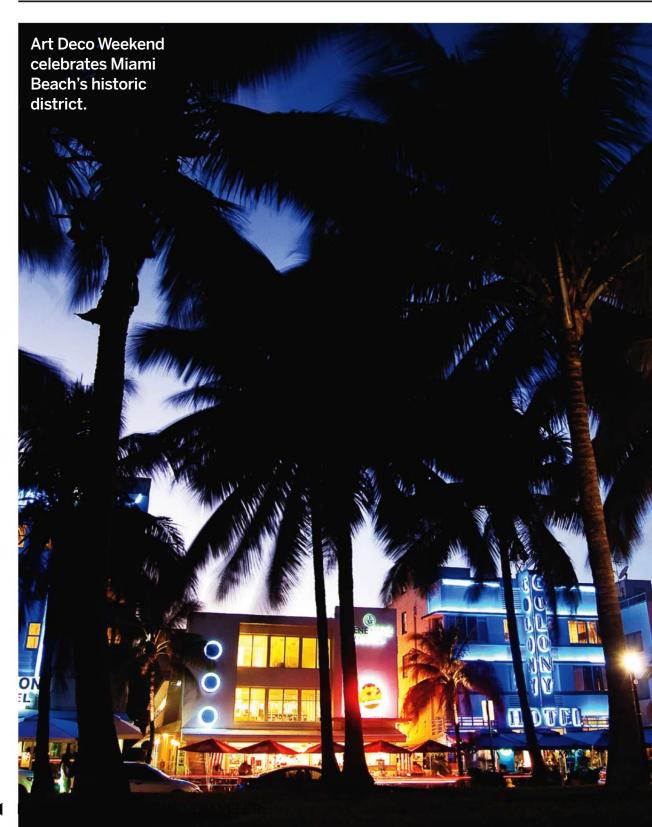
MERIT Linda Reno of **Austin, Texas,** was in New Orleans on Super Sunday, when Mardi Gras "Indians" (locals wearing highly stylized versions of Plains Indians dress) hold processions. During one parade, Reno

walked away a Mardi Gras white building parked in from



from the crowd to take a break. "I spotted Indian wearing a white suit in front of a g with a white trailer and a white truck nt," she says. (Canon EOS 5D Mark II digital camera, 35mm lens, exposure at 1/4000 second, f/1.8, ISO 100)

TRAVELE





TRAVEL-WORTHY EVENTS & HAPPENINGS

SEPTEMBER 10-12

MIAMI, FLORIDA

1930s Revisited

Art Deco Weekend draws some 400,000 fans to Miami Beach's historic art deco district. The Miami Design Preservation League leads walking tours; vendors sell collectibles, antiques, and art along ten blocks of Ocean Drive: and classic cars, not SUVs, parade along the waterfront for a change. Film and lecture series address this year's theme, "Selling Glamour and Style: Art Deco and Advertising." www.mdpl.org

JANUARY 11

ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

Distinctly Dalí The Dalí Museum opens the doors to its new waterfront home in downtown St. Petersburg at 11:11 a.m. on 1/11/11. Containing the largest collection of the surrealist's works outside of his native Spain, and at twice the size of its former venue, the museum showcases some 2,100 pieces, including nearly a hundred oil paintings. Glass panels wrap around the new building, evoking a melting Dalí watch. In attendance at the ribbon cutting: the King of Spain's youngest daughter, Infanta Cristina. The city has hosted the original Dalí Museum for almost three decades after a Cleveland couple decided on St. Petersburg as the site for their extensive collection of the artist's works. www.thedali.org

JANUARY 13-16

GRAND CAYMAN

Top Chef: Caribbean Celebrity chef Eric Ripert, who heads the Grand Cayman restaurant Blue, hosts the Caribbean's top culinary festival, Cayman Cookout. He'll create a gourmet picnic at Starfish



We want your photographs. Upload your favorite travel picture with a caption of no more than 200 words to Your Shot/Travel at *ngm.com/yourshot*. Tag all submissions with the keyword "travel." We will publish one photo we love in each issue.

■ NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TRAVELER



Inle Lake, Burma

Photograph and text by Chris Martin

URING MY VISIT to Burma (Myanmar) earlier this year, I went out on a long-tail canoe each morning to explore the smooth surface of Inle Lake. With this photograph, I wanted to capture the calm as the fishing boats head out before the sun climbs over the hills stacked along the shoreline. The fishermen use the traditional style of rowing with their legs, which allows them to stand and get a better view of the water while also keeping one hand free to manipulate the conical net they use to catch fish. Inle Lake, at 48 square miles, is Burma's second largest lake. Some 70,000 people live in villages built on stilts in the middle of the water or located around the lake. Later in the day, boats ferry children to school and take merchants across the water to deliver goods, but in the morning everything is quiet. For me, this photograph suggests some of the mystery of East Asia while depicting a very common scene on this lake.

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